

23 June 1973

The Honorable Les Aspin
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Aspin:

The Congressional Record of June 27, 1972, carries a letter addressed to me by you announcing your release of "substantial new evidence that indicates U. S. pilots flying CIA operated helicopters have been smuggling opium inside Laos."

I have yet to receive your letter. Pending its receipt, however, I shall begin a thorough investigation of this alleged "new evidence" and will advise you in due course of the results. In this connection, I call to your attention the testimony of Mr. Nelson Gross, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters, before the Congressional Inquiry Regarding International Narcotics Traffic on June 9, 1972. He there quoted the Air America Managing Director's statement that Mr. Alfred McCoy's allegation before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee that Air America aircraft have been transporting opium in Northern Laos on a regular basis is "utterly and absolutely false."

In the interim, I wish to reiterate strongly what I have said publicly to the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

There is the arrant nonsense that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an Agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem.

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In addition, you will have no doubt noticed in the Congressional Record of June 2, 1971, that Congressman Charles Gubser cited a letter from Mr. John Ingersoll, Director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, attesting to the fact that this Agency has taken a great number of steps against the narcotics trade. Further, we have issued the strongest instructions, and have most vigorously enforced them, to prohibit any inadvertent use of CIA facilities by narcotics smugglers.

In the light of these well-established positions, we find it disappointing to be subjected to the type of public allegation represented by graduate student McCoy's assertions of "new evidence," the innuendo in which can only dishearten CIA personnel of honor and integrity working against this nefarious trade.

I have taken the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Congressman Gubser because of his interest in these matters.

Sincerely,

~~W~~ Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

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72-36941

29 June 1972

The Honorable Charles S. Gubser
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

My dear Mr. Gubser:

Thank you most sincerely for your willingness to be of assistance again in countering the most recent allegations that CIA is involved in the drug traffic. Herewith is a copy of the interim reply I sent to Congressman Aspin's letter, together with a few thoughts you might like to use in preparing an introductory statement to insert the letter in the Congressional Record.

Needless to say, I personally assure you in the strongest terms of the accuracy of my statements and of our determination in CIA to stamp out this terrible trade.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

/s/

Richard Helms
Director

Attachments

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LES ASPIN

1ST DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

HOME OFFICE:
603 MAIN STREET
RACINE, WISCONSIN 53403
414-632-8194

210 DOUGLASS STREET
JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN 53545
603-752-9074

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Washington, D.C. 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
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72-3764

June 27, 1972

Mr. Richard Helms, Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Helms:

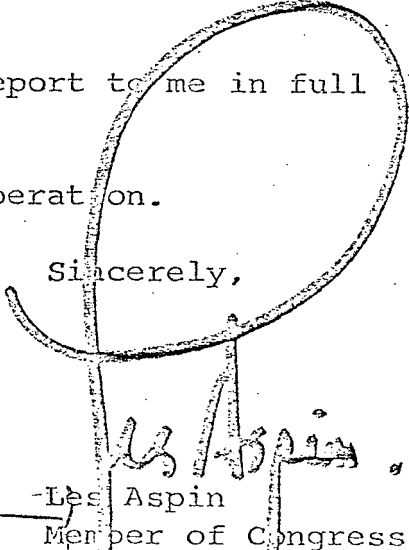
I am publicly releasing today substantial new evidence that indicates that U.S. pilots flying CIA-operated helicopters have been smuggling opium inside Laos. These allegations are contained in a letter and additional information that I have received from Mr. Alfred McCoy, author of a forthcoming book on heroin traffic in Southeast Asia. If these allegations are true, then the CIA is implicated in fostering the drug traffic that ruins the lives of tens of thousands of Americans.

I am writing to you today to request that you thoroughly investigate Mr. McCoy's allegations. Since Mr. McCoy obtained his information last summer, it is imperative to determine whether this kind of drug trafficking is still going on. A principal unanswered question which the CIA must resolve is: "At what level in the CIA were officials aware of this illicit drug traffic?"

I hope that you will report to me in full the results of your investigation.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,


-Les Aspin
Member of Congress

LA:bk

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NOTE to

72-3691/2

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ME



Pls prepare a summary for Cong Aspin per the DCE's comment & our telecon



Executive Director 1 AUG 1972

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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